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SUBJECT: USUNESCO: NEW DIVISION CREATED FOR SCIENCE POLICY & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

11. Summary and Introduction. UNESCO DG Matsuura has announced the creation of a new Division for Science and Sustainable Development (SC/PSD) in the natural sciences sector to be directed by Mustafa El Tayeb, formerly the Director of the Science Analysis and Policies Division. The division streamlines various science sector units already working on sustainable development issues. It appears to have been created to contribute to UNESCO's program on the "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (DESD), still in its developmental stages. End summary and introduction.

A Streamlined Structure to Promote Science Policy And Development

12. El Tayeb told science officer and intern (note taker) that the goals of the reorganization of the division include: (1) streamlining sustainable development efforts of small units that existed within the natural sciences sector; (2) ensuring that small island developing states are given attention; and (3) supporting UNESCO's leading role in the UN's "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (DESD) (launched with fanfare in March).

13. The new Division for Science Policy & Sustainable Development is structured to include four sections: Science Policy Formulation (PSD/SP); Sustainable Development of Coastal Regions and Small Island Developing States (PSD/CSI); Science Policy Studies and Information (PSD/POS); and the DESD [Decade of Education for Sustainable Development] Coordinating Unit (PSD/DCU). El Tayeb emphasized that his division differs from other science sector divisions in that it does not include any intergovernmental programs; he noted that the science policy programs need to be country specific.

14. El Tayeb said that the new division would continue the work of the former Science Analysis and Policies Division in promoting the UN Millennium Goals in science and technology. It will seek to foster growth for developing countries by providing guidance to policymakers, creating networks with private industry, developing university programs, promoting entrepreneurship training, and building technology parks and incubators via the UNESCO Chairs Program. El Tayeb said there is a need for linkages between universities and industry so that universities are training students for actual jobs: "Education for Jobs". In this regard, SC/PSD will continue to focus on regional workshops focused on science and technology training and policymaking for developing countries in Africa, the Arab world, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, as well as for small island member states.

15. Parliamentarians continue to be a key target audience, El Tayeb reported. He said that the World Conference on Science held in Budapest in June 1999 - a roundtable for parliamentary leaders of member states - has driven many of UNESCO's science sector initiatives because developing states have called for this type of technical support. The Second World Conference on Science was held in Budapest in 2003, with Third World Conference on Science planned for Nov. 2005, also in Budapest; conferences will be held every two years thereafter. The U.S. National Science Foundation has participated in the Budapest Conferences.

Forging A Science Sector Role in the "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development"

16. Regarding the "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (DESD), El Tayeb said that SC/PSD is working "to create a common policy for sustainable development" with the Basic and Engineering Sciences Division of the Science Sector; the Social Sciences Sector; and the Higher Education Division of the Education Sector. Within the Education Sector, SC/PSD is also working on DESD with the Office of Quality Education, headed by American Mary Joy Pigozzi. El Tayeb explained that the Decade of Education for Sustainable

Development is a priority for the newly named Assistant Director General for Education, Peter Smith (U.S). (Note: this has been confirmed in our conversations with ADG Smith. End Note.)

17. To provide "content" for the science sector's contribution to the DESD, El Tayeb intends to draw on the Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS) as a tool to educate developing country policymakers, academics and scientific researchers. The EOLSS project was started in 1996 and managed by the UNESCO-EOLSS Joint Committee. It contains 6,000 articles by experts in the natural sciences, 1,500 of which are from USA experts. It has not yet been officially published (Oxford: Eolss Publishers Co. Ltd. For further information go to: <http://www.eolss.net> -- login username: uejcssec, password: eolssaxes). The encyclopedia's usefulness to developing states is limited as it is currently available in English only.

18. The Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems, which El Tayeb described as a compendium of verified knowledge from experts around the world, is meant to be a tangible product to promote scientific education for dealing with policy concerns. El Tayeb contended that there is a paradigm shift in education, which requires content to be integrated around problems and issues, in addition to scientists seeking knowledge in and of itself.

19. DG Matsuura has underlined to his staff the importance of UNESCO's role in the "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (DESD). But the resources to be devoted to the DESD and the modalities of UNESCO's implementation are still evolving.
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